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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of): draft resolution

Decision of the Special Committee of 17 June 2013 concerning Puerto Rico

The Special Committee,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Considering that the midway point of the period 2011-2020, proclaimed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 65/119 of 10 December 2010, as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, will soon be reached,

Bearing in mind the 32 resolutions and decisions adopted by the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico contained in the reports of the Special Committee to the General Assembly, in particular those adopted without a vote in recent years,

Recalling that 25 July 2014 marks the 116th anniversary of the intervention in Puerto Rico by the United States of America,

Noting with concern that despite the diverse initiatives taken by the political representatives of Puerto Rico and the United States in recent years, the process of the decolonization of Puerto Rico, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee on Puerto Rico, has not yet been set in motion,

Bearing in mind that the people of Puerto Rico mostly rejected its current status of political subordination on 6 November 2012, and that that status prevents it from taking sovereign decisions to address the serious economic and social problems of Puerto Rico,

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Stressing again the urgent need for the United States to lay the groundwork for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Noting that the Inter-agency Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status designated by the President of the United States, which submitted its third report on 16 March 2011, reaffirmed that Puerto Rico is a territory subject to United States congressional authority,

Taking note of the Declaration adopted at the II Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) held in Havana on 28 and 29 January 2014, in which the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico is reiterated, note is taken of the resolutions on Puerto Rico adopted by the Special Committee, reiterating that it is an issue of interest for CELAC, a commitment is made to continue working, in the framework of international law, particularly in the framework of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), to make the region of Latin America and the Caribbean a territory free of colonialism and colonies, and the CELAC Quartet, with the participation of other member States that wish to join the mandate, is entrusted to present proposals to move forward on the matter,

Also noting the Special Declaration on Puerto Rico adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our Americas in Caracas on 4 and 5 February 2012, whereby they expressed their strong support for the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and full independence; recalled that Puerto Rico is a Latin American and Caribbean nation with its own unmistakable identity and history, whose rights to sovereignty have been violated by the imposed colonial rule for more than a century; stressed that the cause of the independence of Puerto Rico concerns the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and their forums for dialogue and political cooperation — particularly the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and demanded the release of political prisoners convicted for fighting for the independence and self-determination of Puerto Rico, including comrade Oscar López Rivera, who has been imprisoned under inhumane conditions for 33 years,

Further noting the "Panama Proclamation", adopted by the Latin American and Caribbean Congress in support of Puerto Rico's Independence, which was held in Panama on 18 and 19 November 2006 and was attended by 33 political parties from 22 countries of the region, the conclusions thereof were reaffirmed in the declaration adopted by the Council of the Socialist International in Portugal, on 5 February 2013, expressing support to the repeated and unanimous call of the Special Committee for the General Assembly to examine the colonial case of Puerto Rico, and for the release of Oscar López Rivera and other Puerto Rican patriots who are serving sentences in jails in the United States; and satisfaction and solidarity with the overwhelming rejection of the people of Puerto Rico to the continuation of the current colonial status of Puerto Rico is likewise demonstrated,

Noting also the debate in Puerto Rico on the search for a procedure that would enable the launch of the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico, and aware of the ineffectiveness of consultations originating in the United States, the principle that any initiative for the solution of the political status of Puerto Rico should originate from the people of Puerto Rico, and the fact that, to date, several draft laws in

favour of convening a constitutional assembly on status have been presented in Puerto Rico,

Further noting the consensus among the people of Puerto Rico in favour of the release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners, some of whom have been serving sentences in prisons in the United States of America for more than 33 years for cases related to the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence,

Noting the concern of the people of Puerto Rico regarding violent actions, including repression and intimidation, against Puerto Rican independence fighters, including those that have recently come to light through documents declassified by federal agencies of the United States,

Aware that Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, was used for over 60 years by the United States Marines to carry out military exercises, with negative consequences for the health of the population, the environment and the economic and social development of that Puerto Rican municipality,

Noting the consensus existing among the people and the Government of Puerto Rico on the necessity of ensuring the clean-up, decontamination and return to the people of Puerto Rico of all the territory previously used for military exercises and installations, and of using them for the social and economic development of Puerto Rico, as well as on the slowness of the process thus far,

Also noting the complaints made constantly by the inhabitants of Vieques Island regarding the continued bombing and the use of open burning for clean-up, which exacerbate the existing health problems and pollution and endanger civilian lives,

Further noting that in the Final Document of the Sixteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries,[1] held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 26 to 31 August 2012, and other meetings of the Movement, the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence is reaffirmed under General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the Government of the United States is urged to assume its responsibility to expedite a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence and to return the territory and occupied installations on Vieques Island and at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station to the Puerto Rican people, who constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation, and the General Assembly is urged to actively consider the question of Puerto Rico in all its aspects,

Having heard statements and representative testimonies of various viewpoints among the people of Puerto Rico and their social institutions,

Having considered the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico:[2]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution to the question of Puerto Rico;

[1] A/67/506-S/2012/752, annex I.

[2] A/AC.109/2014/L.13.

2. *Reiterates* that the Puerto Rican people constitutes a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own unequivocal national identity;

3. *Calls again* upon the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility to expedite a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance and in full compliance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico, and to take decisions, in a sovereign manner, to address their urgent economic and social needs;

4. *Notes* the broad support of eminent persons, Governments and political forces in Latin America and the Caribbean for the independence of Puerto Rico;

5. *Again notes* the debate in Puerto Rico on the implementation of a mechanism that would ensure the full participation of representatives of all viewpoints prevailing in Puerto Rico, including a constitutional assembly on status with a basis in the decolonization alternatives recognized in international law, and aware of the principle that any initiative for the solution of the political status of Puerto Rico should originate from the people of Puerto Rico;

6. *Expresses* serious concern regarding the actions carried out against Puerto Rican independence fighters, and encourages the investigation of those actions with the necessary rigour and with the cooperation of the relevant authorities;

7. *Requests* the General Assembly to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous and comprehensive review in all its aspects;

8. *Urges* the Government of the United States, in line with the need to guarantee the Puerto Rican people their legitimate right to self-determination and the protection of their human rights, to complete the return of occupied land and installations on Vieques Island and in Ceiba to the people of Puerto Rico, respect fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and economic development, and expedite and cover the costs of the process of cleaning up and decontaminating the areas previously used in military exercises through means that do not continue to worsen the serious consequences of its military activity for the health of the inhabitants of Vieques Island and the environment;

9. *Reiterates its request* to the President of the United States of America to release the following Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in United States prisons for cases relating to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico: Oscar López Rivera, who has been serving a sentence for over 33 years and whose case is of humanitarian character, and Norberto González Claudio, who was arrested more recently;

10. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee, in compliance with its resolution of 17 June 2013;

11. *Requests* the Rapporteur to report in 2014 on the implementation of the present resolution;

12. *Decides* to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous review.